

FW&P Committee

RE: HB382

2/3/09

Mr. Chairman and members of this Committee

My name is Betty Tiddy. I have lived in Montana all my life, raised 2 boys, and hunted many of the mountains here and in this great State.

I have volunteered at grade school (1st grade to 6th grade) for 5 years. I am appalled to think anyone would give a child under 12 years of age any kind of hunting privileges with a firearm. I have heard these children talk about the video games, where they find it fun and exciting to kill, just to kill and see the blood. They need to be taught ethics. I hear the parents say, they don't have time, they both work, have meetings or whatever. These children need to be taught by qualified instructors and have a hands on experience with a firearm.

I have taken the Hunter education classes twice, with my son and again with my grandson; four years ago.

As these children start growing up they hear about age limits.

- 5 years old to start school
- 12 years old to hunt
- 16 years old to drive
- 18 years old to vote
- 21 years old to drink

We all had to wait, and there was some sort of excitement and something to look forward to. I know the times have changed but we are talking about children with firearms. Yes, there are a lot of very smart young people out there, and better very responsible parents; but that's not a good enough reason to put a gun in the hands of children until they are ready.

Thank You,
Betty Tiddy

Handwritten signature: Betty Tiddy
Handwritten text: I am appalled to think anyone would give a child under 12 years of age any kind of hunting privileges with a firearm.